

To: Governor
From: Buddy Bynum
Re: Memo on processes, improvement
Date: November 13, 2007

The work of the Governor's Communications staff is pretty straightforward and generally can be broken down into two areas – media-related and things that can become media-related.

Communications handles messaging, media inquiries, press releases, press conferences, media relations, and either produces or coordinates the production of statements and talking points for the Governor's consideration. In addition, Communications staff produces a daily news summary, posts updates to the Governor's web site, maintains mailing lists of allies, and produces messages designed to help build grassroots support for the Governor's initiatives (i.e., sending education-related information to the Teacher Advisory Committee, or writing op-eds and letters to the editor on behalf of allies who stood with us on funding for the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi). Communications has also initiated and coordinated special projects with other state agencies (i.e., the "Stay Alert. Stay Alive." hurricane preparedness public relations campaign; in fact, we interact with other agencies quite a bit.

I try to make professional judgments on how a specific message can best be delivered, which requires skills in traditional media – TV, radio and newspapers – and in non-traditional media – blogging and other Internet-based resources. I try to keep a good grasp of pending issues, anticipate what might come up in the immediate future, and take advantage of opportunities. I also write as much as possible and do the final editing before anything written is distributed. All of us are engaged in media relations work every day.

The addition of Rebekah Staples on a full-time basis and getting Kathryn Stewart back two days a week are huge advantages; both are loyal and talented. Pete Smith is very conscientious and capable, and does a great job as the Governor's press secretary; in that role he is the media's main point of contact in the Governor's Office. Given the skill sets of each individual in the Communications shop, current staffing is adequate for current operations. Our process of getting things done is underpinned by the act of

talking to each other, and given the small size of the Communications staff it works quite well.

In terms of improvement, we need a more formalized process under which:

- Non-scheduling content for the Governor's speeches/public appearances is coordinated by Communications with input from all appropriate staff, particularly policy staff.
- Appointment announcements are drafted, approved by the appointee and finalized in coordination with the name being sent to the Secretary of State

The Communications staff has excellent relationships with other members of the Governor's staff, which produces a good exchange of information on a wide variety of topics. From this exchange we can ascertain media opportunities or, in some cases, a heads-up for pending trouble. We also have good coordination the vast majority of the time with most agencies that report to the Governor.